

**To:** Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Press[Press@epa.gov]; EOC Public Information[EOC\_Public\_Information@epa.gov]; Harrison, Melissa[Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov]  
**From:** StClair, Christie  
**Sent:** Tue 8/25/2015 2:53:29 AM  
**Subject:** Re: CLOSED - BNA

FYI all - if it comes up again, we have some updated language around the number of inactive mines. It is EOC and OSWER approved, and in the media tracker.

The EOC tomorrow will be developing a q and a based on closed responses to date, which should help a bit.

Christie

**Christie St. Clair**

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On Aug 24, 2015, at 6:14 PM, "David Gray" <[Gray.David@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:Gray.David@epamail.epa.gov)> wrote:

**CLOSED**

**From:** Gray, David  
**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2015 4:12 PM  
**To:** 'Baltz, Tripp'  
**Subject:** RE: BNA Question

**From:** Baltz, Tripp [<mailto:abaltz@bna.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2015 3:58 PM  
**To:** Gray, David  
**Subject:** RE: BNA Question

OK, here you go.

- 1) Were the workers who removed backfill dirt from the portal barricade EPA employees or employees of Environmental Restoration LLC, the on-site contractor?
- 2) How many EPA employees were on-site and how many were employees of ER LLC?
- 3) Friday EPA said its activities at Gold King were to “address the risk of blow out identified by EPA and the State of Colorado by taking actions to relieve pressure build up from historic construction operations at the interconnected mines by the previous mining operator.” Did this involve removing the blockage at the portal?
- 4) Were workers trying to remove blockage at the portal of the mine while simultaneously trying to drain/control water when the blowout occurred?
- 5) Todd Hennis, CEO of San Juan Corp., told me EPA was lucky no one was killed up at the site. How close were workers to being hurt, and how did they avoid being hurt?

We are not speculating on the findings of the independent review or internal technical examination of the incident. The Department of Interior is conducting an independent review of the release which will determine the adequacy of the activities leading up to the incident. In addition, EPA is conducting its own internal technical examination of the incident.

- 6) How many abandoned and inactive mine sites are there in the U.S.? In Colorado.
- 7) The state says of the abandoned and inactive mines in Colorado, about 200-230 are

similar to Gold King. Is that right?

I don't have a national or state number of mines for you. I have heard thousands but don't know.

8) Hennis said Sunnyside is the source of the contaminated water in Gold King, Mogul, and Red and Bonita. Is that correct?

I cannot confirm this statement.

9) Administrator McCarthy said last week EPA is "standing down" on cleanups at sites similar to Gold King ... is that still in effect? Approximately how many sites does that affect?

EPA has worked successfully to address environmental concerns at hundreds of abandoned mine sites across the West. EPA will thoroughly investigate this incident, and it is committed to applying all lessons learned to its work as it moves forward.

While EPA continues to investigate the root causes of the release of mining waste at the Gold King Mine, all EPA regional offices will immediately cease any field investigation work at mines, including tailings facilities. EPA is in the process of initiating an independent assessment by a sister federal agency or another external entity to examine the factors that led to the Gold King Mine incident. Based on the outcome from that assessment, EPA will determine what actions may be necessary to avoid similar incidents at other sites.

While EPA stops work on existing field investigations and assessments at these mining sites, EPA also is instructing its regional offices to identify existing sites with similarities to the Gold King Mine site, to identify any potential immediate threats and to consider appropriate response actions.

[illegible]

abaltz@bna.com

Easiest for us, yes.

ED\_000552E\_00002946-00004

OK, thanks, David. Best if I send the question via email, then?

[illegible]

Tripp Baltz

Staff Correspondent

Bloomberg BNA

Direct 303.358.3371

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**From:** Gray, David [<mailto:gray.david@epa.gov>]

**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2015 3:22 PM

**To:** Baltz, Tripp <[abaltz@bna.com](mailto:abaltz@bna.com)>

**Subject:** BNA Question

Hi Tripp,

We are writing from the JIC in Durango. We are happy to a try to answer any questions from here. The team is in the field.

David